

STANFORD DAILY (CA)

6 March 1984

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CIA's visit to Stanford conjures up images of Agent 007

Last week Stanford students had a unique opportunity. To witness the first emergency heart transplant performed by a paramedic? To buy the latest model anti-satellite weapon at a special "student rate"?

No, something even more unique. We were invited to attend the Central Intelligence Agency Career Days.

The CIA took out three full-page ads in this newspaper to inform us that we were invited. The cost of these ads was almost \$3000, courtesy of the taxpayers. If that doesn't outrage you, think of this: That money went to help *print this column*.

Career Days turned out to be last Wednesday and Thursday. On Wednesday, they had two "major briefings" — that's spy lingo for "information meeting." I went to one of those briefings — it was an elaborate disinformation ploy to make us believe that everyone in the CIA is boring and middle-aged. I wasn't fooled.

On Thursday, they held individual interviews, looking, they said, for those who want the "satisfaction that comes from doing work of vital importance to our nation." They need someone to take "The A Team" off the air?

No, they wanted people with skills and knowledge in such areas as engineering, law, economics, and (this is for real) overseas intelligence. I didn't even know Stanford offered an overseas intelligence major.

The reaction to this in my dorm ranged all the way from "I don't care" to "I don't read The Daily." The closest thing I heard to a moral objection to the CIA was when someone pointed out that their starting salaries weren't as high as those of federal drug enforcement agents.

I personally have opposed the CIA ever since Roger Moore became James Bond. The dark sunglasses — the three-piece suits — the way Secret Service agents can inconspicuously carry submachine guns — it all makes me nervous.

The CIA is not just another company. Some of the stuff they do is really outrageous. Take, for example, the time they

tried to make Fidel Castro's beard fall out so as to embarrass him. What if the Cubans tried to do that to us? Our President embarrasses himself enough as it is. A little red dye No. 2 in his Grecian formula could destroy him.

The CIA has a long record of coups, assassinations and support for right-wing dictatorships. I suppose eventually it'll all turn out to be a misunderstanding — "Make the world safe for democracy? I thought you said *from!*" — but until then, there's no telling what they'll do. Rumor has it that they were planning on overthrowing Jerry Brown, until it was pointed out that California was part of the United States. The CIA apologized and gave the job back to the FBI.

Some people admit that the CIA does bad things, but think that they won't be involved in them because they are techies and techies are never morally responsible for anything. Wrong. Who do you think made Oddjob's deadly hats? Or all those combination swizzle stick/poison dart blow guns? Besides, do you want to be a mad scientist? People who invent things for secret organizations are always mad scientists.

Or George Bush. George Bush was in the CIA. You may be forced to be vice president when you leave the CIA, too.

Which is not to say that there aren't some things to be said for working for the CIA. The pay is good, the benefits are generous, and if you don't like the country they station you in, you can always overthrow its government. By telling people that your job is classified, you can make it sound exciting, even if all you actually do is translate the Albania Times-Tribune. You can assassinate people that bug you.

But the real question is: If you're going to start interviewing with the CIA, where do you draw the line? How about a job with the Soviet Air Command ("must be able to identify plane types")? Or the Iranian Armed Forces — "It's not just a job — it's a jihad"?

Or let's put it this way: If you don't mind belonging to an amoral, subversive organization with no respect for the law, why aren't you in the Band?

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